WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A computer-implemented method for enabling a user to extract information from business data, comprising:

automatically identifying a data navigation path from a collection of relationships between individual sets of data comprised within the business data; and

providing the data navigation path to the user so as to enable the user to move from a first data set to a related second data set.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises receiving from the user a data context related to the first set of data.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the receiving from the user step is the first step.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein automatically identifying a data navigation path further comprises:

providing the data context to a provider that is associated with a first type of data navigation;

receiving from the provider a link representing a data navigation path that is of the first type of data navigation; and

wherein providing the data navigation path to the user comprises providing said link to the user.

5. The method of claim 2, wherein providing the data context to a provider comprises providing the data context to a provider that is associated with a drill down type of navigation.

6. The method of claim 2, wherein providing the data context to a provider comprises providing the data context to a provider that is associated with navigation from aggregated data to related transaction data.

7. The method of claim 2, wherein providing the data context to a provider comprises providing the data context to a provider that is associated with a drill up type of navigation.

8. The method of claim 2, wherein providing the data context to a provider comprises providing the data contenxt to a provider that is associated with navigation from transaction data to related aggregated data.

9. The method of claim 2, wherein providing the data context to a provider comprises providing the data context to a provider that is associated with a drill across type of navigation.

10. The method of claim 2, wherein providing the data context to a provider comprises providing the data context to a provider that is associated with navigation between two data units that share a dimension.

11. The method of claim 2, wherein providing the data context to a provider comprises providing the data context to a provider that is associated with a drill to details type of navigation.

12. The method of claim 2, wherein providing the data context to a provider comprises providing the data context to a provider that is associated with navigation through collections of data that are hierarchically organized.

13. The method of claim 2, wherein providing the data context to a provider comprises providing the data context to a provider that is associated with a logic association type of navigation.

14. The method of claim 2, wherein providing the data context to a provider comprises providing the data context to a provider that is associated with navigation between two data collections that the user has identified as related.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein providing the data navigation path to the user comprises providing a traversable data navigation link to the user.

16. The method of claim 2, wherein providing the data navigation path to the user comprises providing the user with a collection of data navigation links that each represent a data navigation path that is available based on the received data context, wherein one of the data navigation links corresponds to the provided data navigation path.

17. A system for enabling a user to extract information from business data, the system comprising:

a plurality of data navigation providers each associated with a specific type of navigation;

a navigation service layer configured to transmit a navigation service request to one or more of the data navigation providers; and

a metadata service for providing the plurality of data navigation providers with access to a metadata store, each data navigation provider being configured to respond to a received data navigation request by interacting with the metadata service to identify at least one data navigation path.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein said at least one data navigation path corresponds to the received data navigation request.

19. The system of claim 17, wherein said at least one data navigation path corresponds to a data context provided with the received data navigation request.

20. The system of claim 17, wherein each data navigation provider is further configured to respond to provide the navigation service layer with one or more navigation links that correspond to said at least one data navigation path.

21. The system of claim 20, wherein the navigation service layer is further configured to provide the user with an aggregated collection of navigation links that represent navigation links collected from multiple data navigation providers.

22. The system of claim 21, wherein the navigation service layer is further configured to receive a selection command from the user, the selection command corresponding to a selected navigation link.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein the navigation service layer is further configured to transmit the selection command to a corresponding one of the data navigation providers.

24. The system of claim 23, wherein the system further comprises a data service provider that is associated with a data collection, the corresponding one of the data navigation service providers being configured to interact with the data service provider so as to retrieve data from the data collection, wherein the data retrieved from the data collection corresponds to the selection command.

25. The system of claim 24, wherein the data retrieved from the data collection represents a traversal of the selected navigation link and is returned to the user through the navigation service layer.

26. The system of claim 23, wherein the system further comprises a data service provider that is associated with a data warehouse, the corresponding one of the data navigation service providers being configured to interact with the data service provider so as to retrieve data from the data warehouse, wherein the data retrieved from the data warehouse corresponds to the selection command.

27. The system of claim 23, wherein the system further comprises a data service provider that is associated with a database, the corresponding one of the data navigation service providers being configured to interact with the data service provider

so as to retrieve data from the database, wherein the data retrieved from the database corresponds to the selection command.

28. The system of claim 17, wherein at least on of the plurality of data navigation providers is associated with navigation from aggregated data to related transaction data.

29. The system of claim 17, wherein at least on of the plurality of data navigation providers is associated with navigation from transaction data to related aggregated data.

30. The system of claim 17, wherein at least on of the plurality of data navigation providers is associated with a drill across type of navigation.

31. The system of claim 17, wherein at least on of the plurality of data navigation providers is associated with navigation between two data units that share a dimension.

32. The system of claim 17, wherein at least on of the plurality of data navigation providers is associated with a drill to details type of navigation.

33. The system of claim 17, wherein at least on of the plurality of data navigation providers is

associated with hierarchical navigation through collections of data that are hierarchically organized.

34. The system of claim 17, wherein at least on of the plurality of data navigation providers is associated with navigation between two data collections that the user has identified as related.

35. The system of claim 17, wherein the navigation service layer is further configured to support at least one successfully registered additional data navigation provider, wherein the successfully registered additional data navigation provider becomes one of the plurality of data navigation providers.

36. A system for enabling a user to extract information from business data, the system comprising:

a plurality of data navigation providers each associated with a specific type of navigation;

a metadata service for providing the plurality of data navigation providers with access to a metadata store so that the data navigation providers are able to generate data navigation links based on information in the metadata store;

a navigation service layer configured to transmit a navigation service request to one or more of the data navigation providers, to receive data navigation links from the plurality of data navigation providers, to present data navigation links to the user for selection, to receive a user selection of a data navigation link, and to transmit the user selection to one or more of the plurality of data navigation providers; and

a data service provider that is associated with a data collection and configured to interact with a data navigation provider so as to retrieve data from the data collection based on the user selection, at least some of the data retrieved from the data collection being provided to the user as a response to the user selection of a data navigation link.

37. An object programming model having a unified user interface that, when invoked, enables a user to:

navigate between collections of information on an ad-hoc basis; and

navigate between collections of information based on pre-defined navigation paths.

38. The method of claim 37, wherein the user is enabled to navigate between collections of

information on an ad-hoc basis through application of at least a GetLinks() function.

39. The method of claim 38, wherein the user is enabled to navigate between collections of information on an ad-hoc basis through application of at least a TraverseLinks function.

40. The method of claim 37, wherein the user is enabled to navigate between collections of information based on pre-defined navigation paths through application of at least a Navigate function.